DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 153 338 EA 010 524

AUTHOR Johnson, Florence DeVida H.
TITLE The Relationship Between Rule Administration and the Leadership Behavior of Black Male and Female Urban Elementary School Principals.
PUB DATE [Nov 77]
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual National Conference on Urban Education, "The Survival of Urban Education" (3rd, Norfolk, Virginia, November 20-22, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Characteristics; *Administrator Role; Blacks; Educational Administration; *Educational Research; Elementary Schools; Elementary Secondary Education; Females; *Leadership Qualities; Leadership Styles; Males; *Principals; *School Administration

ABSTRACT

This investigation was undertaken to test the relationships among rule administration behavior (how principals administer school rules), leadership behavior, and the sex of black elementary school principals. Twenty principals were subjects, with 200 teachers supplying responses to the Rule Administration Scale (RAS) and the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). The results showed that female principals were perceived by their teachers as more representative and more punishment-centered than males in their administration of the rules. In terms of leader behavior, the females were rated higher than the males in representation, demand reconciliation, persuasiveness, initiation of structure, role assumption, production emphasis, predictive accuracy, integration, and superior orientation. Both male and female principals perceived themselves to be stronger leaders than their faculty members perceived them to be. (Author/DS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED153338

Title: "The Relationship Between Rule Administration and the Leadership Behavior of Black Male and Female Urban Elementary School Principals"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Author: Florence DeVida H. Johnson
Professor of Education

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Florence DeVida H. Johnson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Institution: Cheyney State College

EA 010 524

Presentor: Florence DeVida H. Johnson
Box 247
Cheyney State College
Cheyney, PA 19319

The Relationship Between Rule Administration and Leadership Behavior of Black Male and Female Urban Elementary School Principals

by Florence DeVida H. Johnson, D.Ed.

The Purpose of the Study

The number of black women in public school administration, particularly at the elementary school level, is decreasing. Numerous explanations have been given for this phenomenon and it has been suggested that the task of school administration is better suited to men because of their behavior as leaders. The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between rule administration, leadership behavior, and the sex of black elementary school principals.

Background and Rationale

The turbulence of the sixties has underscored for the educator and layman alike the plight of those groups for whom the right to pursue more desirable educational and vocational goals and to exercise control over their own lives, has been restricted or denied. Primarily attention has been directed to inequities in the treatment of minorities; in recent years attention has been focused on a majority group, women, and it has been argued that this group has been surprisingly disadvantaged.

Despite radical changes, women remain underrepresented in high status professional or executive positions. Although women constitute over 40 percent of the labor force and control, in name, 82 percent of the country's wealth, their participation in business and industry is minimal.[1]

Men have always dominated the school superintendency including deputy and assistant superintendent positions. According to a 1973 report of the National Council of Administrative Women in Education,

---

[1]Keith Beavan, "Women Demand Equality," Times Educational Supplement 2858: (February 27, 1970), p. 14.

more women than ever before are professionally prepared to be school administrators. Yet in 1971, only 90 women could be counted among the 14,000 superintendents in the United States - less than one percent - and administrators alone warrants a greater place for them i the administrative hierarchy of school systems.[2]

Those who contend that the public schools teach sexism have generally concentrated on examinations of the textbooks the schools use for signs of sex-role stereotyping. Now, however, their inquiries are taking them to a more obvious place: the principal's office. Its occupant is male. Men hold 80 percent of the elementary schools principalships and nearly 99 percent of the superintendents' posts in the nation's public schools. By contrast, women comprise 66 percent of all public school teachers and 80 percent of all elementary school teachers. As a recent study for the Office of Education put it: "Although women staff public school systems in the United States, men run them."[3]

The pattern of overlooking women as an untapped reservoir of executive talent is pervasive, and research studies that reveal the success of women in responsible jobs are largely ignored. During the 1950's and 1960's several such studies were conducted.

Wiles and Gobman, in 1955, investigated the premise that the type of leadership exhibited by a principal was an important determinant of his success. The researchers developed certain test situations. They hypothesized that the way a principal reacted to these situations would reveal the type of leadership usually employed in his or her work. An

---

[2]Joan P. Meekin, "The Performance of Women School Administrators - A Review of the Literature," Administrator's Notebook, 23:(1974), pp. 1-4.

[3]From The Conference "On Women in Educational Policy Making" sponsored by the Institute for Educational Leadership, George Washington University, Washington, D. C., 1974.

interesting finding in this study of men and women administrators was that in their reaction to the test situation, the women ranked significantly ahead of the men in democratic principals.[4]

An extensive research project was conducted on a national basis by John K. Hemphill, Daniel E. Griffiths, and Norman Frederiksen.[5] This study involved 232 principals, 137 of whom were men. The authors stated in Administrative Performance and Personality that there probably is no reason to prefer men over women as principals. The researchers further stated that if such attributes as working with teachers and outsiders; being concerned with objectives of teaching, pupil participation, and the evaluation of learning; and the ability to gain positive reactions from teachers and superiors are important, then women should probably be favored since the women in their study possessed these attributes to a significantly greater degree than did the men.

The Study

In the past two decades, a considerable amount of research has been conducted by scholars, educators, practitioners, and students of education to understand better male and female leadership behavior in secondary and elementary schools. Their findings suggest that the sex of the administrator plays a part in influencing the behavior of those in positions of leadership in education.

The present inquiry examined the relationship between elementary school principals' rule administration and leader behavior as perceived by the teachers and the sex of the black principals. This study speci-

---

[4]Kimball Wiles and Hulda Gross Grobman, "Principals as Leaders," Nation's School, 56:(1955), p. 75.

[5]John K. Hemphill, Daniel E. Griffiths, and Norman Frederiksen, Administrative Performance and Personality (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1962).

fically examined three types of rule administration behavior: (1) representative, (2) punishment-centered, and (3) mock, and twelve dimensions of leadership behavior: (1) representation, (2) demand reconciliation, (3) tolerance of uncertainty, (4) persuasiveness, (5) initiation of structure, (6) tolerance of freedom, (7) role assumption, (8) consideration, (9) production emphasis, (10) predictive accuracy, (11) integration, and (12) superior orientation.

Three null hypotheses were tested. The first hypothesis stated that there would be no significant difference between black male and female elementary school principals with respect to their rule administration behavior. The second hypothesis predicted that there would be no significant difference between black male and female elementary school principals with respect to the twelve dimensions of leadership behavior as perceived by their faculty members. The third hypothesis stated that black male and female elementary school principals self perceptions of leader behavior would not differ significantly from teachers perceptions of their leader behavior.

The sample consisted of selected teachers and the principals of twenty elementary schools located in a large city in the Northeastern United States. There was a total of 200 teachers sampled in the elementary schools, specifically ten from each of the schools surveyed. There was a total of 20 black principals, ten males and ten females. The males and females were selected so that they were matched as closely as feasible in terms of school size, school location, and years of experience. The basic data for the study were collected using two instruments: (1) the Rule Administration Scale, and (2) the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire. The Rule Administration Scale consists of three subscales, one each to measure representative, punishment-centered and mock rule administration. In order to obtain perceptions of the way principals

administer school rules, the Rule Administration Scale was administered to ten teachers in each of the twenty elementary schools. In order to determine the leader behavior of twenty black male and female principals, the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire was administered to both the teacher sample and the principals in the twenty schools. The Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire instrument consists of the twelve dimensions, previously noted.

Each principal respondent also provided information relevant to his or her characteristics and background. This information was obtained by using a background questionnaire.

The hypotheses were tested in the null form. To test three of the hypotheses, a t test was used to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between the appropriate means. Levels of significance were set at the .05 level.

Results and Implications

Null hypothesis 1 predicted that black male and female elementary school principals would not differ significantly with respect to the three indices of rule administration: mock, representative and punishment-centered. Based on the analysis of the data, null hypothesis 1 was not rejected for mock rule administration but was rejected for representative and punishment-centered rule administration. This means that there was no difference in black male and female principals relative to mock rule administration, but there was a significant difference between black male and female elementary school principals relative to representative and punishment-centered rule administration.

The black female principals were perceived by their faculty members as being more representative and more punishment-centered than their male counterparts. The difference was somewhat greater for representative rule administration than for punishment-centered rule administration. Thus, in what may seem to be a contradictory set of findings,

black female principals were found to be both more and less directive in the administration of rules than their male counterparts.

Background data were not obtained for the 200 teachers which in retrospect might have given some insight into the reason for black female principals being perceived as more representative and more punishment-centered than black male principals. Recently, Estadt, Willower, and Caldwell conducted a study dealing with secondary principals' rule administration behavior and teachers' pupil control behavior. One of the auxiliary findings of that investigation was that two of the three patterns of rule administration correlated with teachers' level of education. It is interesting to note that the correlations indicated that teachers with a higher level of education tend to perceive less punishment-centered and more representative rule administration behavior on the part of the principal.[6] This could mean that education influences teacher perceptions or it could mean that principals behave differently toward teachers with varying degrees of education. It is possible that male and female principals react differently to various faculty characteristics, but it is not possible to determine this from the data collected in the present study.

An explanation that makes some sense is that female principals tend to be more definite than male principals in the manner in which they administer rules, regardless of the style employed. Perhaps the female administrators feel a pressure to develop a clear cut type of relationship with faculty. If so, the reasons are not clear, but they could be related to a greater sense of being "on trial" on the part of female principals.

---

[6]Gary J. Estadt, Donald J. Willower, and William E. Caldwell, "School Principals' Rule Administration Behavior and Teachers' Pupil Control Behavior: A Test of the Domino Theory," Contemporary Education 4: (1976), pp. 207-212.

Null hypothesis 2 predicted that the black male and female elementary school principals would not differ significantly in the dimensions of leadership behavior as perceived by their faculty members.

The null hypotheses were not rejected for tolerance of uncertainty, tolerance of freedom, and consideration. There were no perceived significant differences between the black males and females in the degree to which they use these leader behaviors.

On all other dimensions of leader behavior, black female principals were perceived by their faculty members to behave in a significantly different manner in the degree to which they: speak and act as representative of the group; reconcile conflicting demands and reduce disorder to the system; use persuasion and argument effectively; clearly define their own role and let followers know what is expected of them; actively exercise the leadership role; apply pressure for productive output; exhibit foresight and are able to predict outcomes; maintain a closely-knit organization and resolve intermember conflict; and maintain cordial relations with superiors. On these dimensions of leader behavior, the null hypotheses were rejected. That is, the black female principals were higher than the black males in representation, demand reconciliation, persuasiveness, initiation of structure, role assumption, production emphasis, predictive accuracy, integration and superior orientation.

It was stated that one purpose of this study was to determine whether there was any validity in the argument that men are better suited than women, on the basis of their leader behavior, to the task of school administration.

In drawing conclusions from the findings it should be noted that

this research does not attempt to make value judgments about "good" or "bad" leadership behavior. It is important to reemphasize that the two leader behavior instruments used in this study are not measures of leader "effectiveness." To conclude that the scores of the ten black female and ten black male subjects are quantitative measures of one group's superiority to the other group would be a grave injustice.

However, with the above mentioned caution, certain conclusions can be drawn relative to the leadership behavior of black male and female elementary school principals.

First, research conducted by Van Meir indicated that female principals were rated higher than the males on all twelve dimensions, and significant differences were shown on the dimensions of persuasiveness, demand reconciliation, role assumption and predictive accuracy.[7] In the current investigation black female principals scored higher than males on the same dimensions as the Van Meir study as well as the five other dimensions previously cited. If these leader behaviors indicate perceptions of the elementary principal as an educational leader in the school setting, the utilization of black females would be in order.

Secondly, extensive research has been conducted in which high scores on two of the dimensions of leader behavior, initiation of structure and consideration, have been found to correlate with "effectiveness."[8] Hence, it could be contended that black female principals are more "effective" than males since they scored significantly higher than males on initiation of structure and higher but not significantly, on consideration. However, there was no telling, on the basis of the data, at

---

[7]Edward J. Van Meir, "Sexual Discrimination in School Administration Opportunities," Journal of National Association of Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors, 38 (1975), pp. 163-167.

[8]Andrew W. Halpin, B. J. Winer, and Edwin A. Fleishman, "A Factorial Study of the Leader Behavior Descriptions," Leader Behavior: Its Description and Measurements. Edited by Ralph M. Stogdill and Alvin E. Coons, (Columbus: The Ohio State University, 1957).

what point, if any, the scores were indicators of "effectiveness". In any case, it seems clear that the leader behavior of the black females would probably not be less effective than that of black males.

Finally, if an educational leader in the elementary school setting is one who demonstrates such leader behaviors as representation, reconciliation, persuasiveness, initiation of structure, role assumption, production emphasis, predictive accuracy, integration, and superior orientation, the findings point to the desirability of increased utilization of females as elementary school principals.

Null hypothesis 3 proposed that black male and female elementary school principals' self perceptions of leader behavior would not differ significantly from teachers perceptions of their leader behavior. Null hypothesis 3 was rejected. For each of the twelve dimensions both black male and female principals perceived that they exhibited the leader behavior to a significantly greater extent than did their faculty members. These findings suggest that both male and female principals see themselves as stronger leaders than they are seen to be by their faculty members. It would appear that potential principals should be made aware of tendencies toward this kind of perception in their preparation which should lay greater stress on self-awareness.

This investigation was undertaken to test the relationship between rule administration, leadership behavior, and the sex of black elementary school principals. The major findings of the research have been presented. It can be concluded that on the basis of the evidence presented in this study, there is nothing to support the notion that in terms of leader behavior black females should not be utilized as elementary school principals.

Recommendations and Further Research

Although the statistics indicate that there are some significant differences between rule administration behavior and leadership behavior of black male and female elementary school principals as perceived by their faculty members, certain cautions must be kept in mind.

First, this research utilized two instruments which measure perceptions of behavior, not actual behavior. How an individual is perceived to behave, and how he behaves are not the same. It could well be that in actual behavior, the black males and females would not be significantly different. To develop measures of actual behavior remains the task of further research. It is recommended that future studies examine and compare the actual behavior of male and female school administrators.

It is also important to note that the two instruments used in this study are not measures of effectiveness. To make accurate and valid judgments as to the relative effectiveness of black males and females as elementary school leaders has not been accomplished by this study. Measures need to be developed and used with these instruments to determine what is effective and ineffective leadership behavior. It is recommended that future studies deal with the relative effectiveness of male and female school administrators.

While the results of this investigation indicate that black females score higher or as high as males on all twelve dimensions of leader behavior, it is well to observe that what is true for a group is not necessarily true for individuals. Although this study has shown that a person's sex is a variable in how one is perceived to behave as a leader, behavior is affected by a good deal more than an individual's sex. To what extent the multitude of other variables influencing these subjects

which had, or might have had, an effect on the results remains unknown. It is essential to learn more about these subjects as to such factors as their intelligence, personalities, and leadership and educational philosophies, in order to make viable and valid judgments about them as elementary school principals.

Also, the findings pertain to a relatively small number of black administrators all of whom worked in a large, urban area. The use of a larger sample, possibly tricotomized into urban, suburban, and rural groups seems a desirable possibility for further study.

During and after this investigation, a number of other problems were identified which might merit further study:

1. Schools with male and female administrators should be compared on other criteria such as student achievement levels, training of teachers, number and quality of innovations, and scores students receive on standardized tests.

2. Further studies should be conducted comparing the sex of the elementary school principal and leadership behavior from different samples including samples from types of schools and districts not included in the present study.

3. More detailed research is in order for arriving at a more specific role model for both teachers and principals in the elementary school.

4. Further investigations are needed into the reasons why black females are underrepresented as principals of schools in both the elementary and secondary school settings.

Through these studies new data may be provided to answer the question--why is the principalship, particularly at the elementary school level dominated by males?

elw/5/2/11